WHICH, FOR A WIFE?

"So your dearest girl friend is going to be married," said the matron, turning to the girl.

"Yes, and it's a fortunate man who gets her. She'll make him the best of wives," answered the girl, with enthusiasm.

"Well, we can't tell about that," said the woman. "Your friend has led a semi-public life for a good many years. Her work has brought her into contact with the world, with all classes of men, women and children. This, I believe, spoils the naturally feminine taste for domesticity. The average business woman is an excitement craving creature. Eternal change and variety are to her what rum is to the steady drinker, as people call him, though I never could think of any habitual drinker being particularly steady. She feeds on this contact with many men of many minds. I've heard people say that business experience was a distinct advantage to a wife, but I do not believe it. Business women learn too much for their own happiness. They learn to criticise and to analyze people, and this becomes second nature to them, and the husband does not escape. They analyze him and his love, and the minute we begin to analyze love, to separate it, to tear it apart, to weigh it, measure it, do you know what happens? Love disappears."

"Bosh and nonsense," exclaimed the elderly man. "If a truly womanly woman is forced into a business life the effect on her is good because it fits her for the proper realm of woman, and that is home."

"In what way?" asked the girl eagerly.

"Well, you know the average woman has a mistaken idea of marriage. She thinks that ends everything, when it only begins things. She thinks on the day she enters the church a maid and leaves it a bride, 'I'm married now, and there is nothing else to do. This man is mankind for me,' and she settles down, and, while she does her duty toward him and perhaps really and truly loves him, she makes no effort to charm, bewitch, to fascinate, to enslave him. She thinks it is no use. A woman who has had experience in business life does not feel that way. She has learned the value of an extended acquaintance, of the importance of our relation one to another, of our dependence on each other, and she feels that her external life is not to be bound up in this one man. She knows that she can best help him by holding others. Then, too, this business woman has a larger respect, a larger regard, more sympathy for a husband. Personal experience has taught her to be lenient, to be considerate of every human being. She knows that success is obtained only by concentration, by single mindedness, and she won't harass her husband when he comes home with trifling things that will right themselves. She will show a keen consideration for him that the other kind of woman is incapable of. The business woman would not ask a business man, even if that business man is her husband, any more about his affairs than he chooses to tell."

"That all may be true enough," spoke up the girl, "but does a man want his wife to help him in his business career? I don't believe he does. I think he'd rather just think of her as a sweet companion who will be waiting for him when he comes home, a dainty creature, loving and lovable, and most people say that any woman who has ever worked for a living in any capacity loses her femininity. Some miscall it innocence, but I think they mean girlishness. How often we hear it said of a breadwinning woman, 'Oh, yes, she is brilliant, charming, fascinating, but she has lost that thing possessed by women who have never worked!' I've wondered if it was the spirit of dependence they meant, because a working woman does lose that until she falls in love."

"But look at the strength, the endurance, the self control she finds in place of it," argued the man. "For everything we [illegible] something else. You speak of business women losing that indefinable something. Did you ever stop to think that there are just as many women who are not business women and never have possessed it and never will? Everything depends upon the woman herself, I tell you, and I know, for my life has been about evenly divided between society women and business women. You take two women with keen wits, marked intuitive power, ready sympathy, loving hearts and ambition, and let one go into the world to earn her living and the other enter upon a life of social pleasure. What is the result upon them? The business woman grows more keen witted, her sympathy expands from the personal to the universal. She sees humanity as it wants to be, not as it is. Her heart is so full of love that to her everything has its points of beauty and everybody a touch of the divine, and her ambition is not to gain wealth and fame, but by every new effort to gain new force, new power. Not so with the woman of similar attainments who enters on a life of pleasure. True, her wits are apt to become keener, or, rather, more cunning; but her intuition is dwarfed and she looks at actions, not motives. Her sympathy is one sided, for everything is prosperity about her. Her naturally loving heart is repressed because society affects to despise spontaneity, and her ambition is—well, it's generally to be the leader of her set, which is laudable enough in its way. I'm an old man, and I've never married and never shall, but if I were beginning life over again and these two women were before me to choose from my hands would be held out to the girl who, through necessity or choice, has wandered a little way into the world, and at the first summons from the man who loves her and whom she loves returns with an untainted and unwearied heart and is a happy child again. The other woman too often has gone too far astray to be called back to her most perfect self, the sphere of home and wifehood and motherhood."

"You've put a new light on it," said the woman. "I shall feel more tenderly for the woman of the workaday world."

"I shall try to be more like her," said the girl.—New York Sun.

What "Sing a Song of Sixpence" Means.

You all know this rhyme, but have you ever heard what it really means?

The four and twenty blackbirds represented the 24 hours. The bottom of the pie is the world, while the top crust is the sky that over arches it. The opening of the pie is the day dawn, when the birds begin to sing, and surely such a sight is fit for a king.

The king, who is represented as sitting in his parlor counting out his money, is the sun, while the goldpieces that slip through his fingers as he counts them are the golden sunbeams.

The queen, who sits in the dark kitchen, is the moon, and the honey with which she regales herself is the moonlight.

The industrious maid, who is in the garden at work before her king—the sun—has risen, is day dawn, and the clothes she hangs out are the clouds. The bird who so tragically ends the song by "nipping off her nose" is the sunset. So we have the whole day, if not in a nutshell, in a pie.—Exchange.

Mr. William Smith is noted for his jollity and also for keeping late hours. As a rule, he gets home about 2 o'clock in the morning. One evening, however, in a fit of repentance, Mr. Smith decided to go home early and gladden the heart of his lonely wife.

Accordingly he presented himself at the door of his residence soon after 11 p. m. and gave a bold double knock. To his wife's question of "Who's there?" he confidently replied, "William."

"Now, look here," cried Mrs. S. indignantly, "none of that. My man William won't be home for three hours at least, and if you don't clear out at once I'll call the police."

And William heard the grating of the key in the lock and the rattle of the chain and meekly concluded that reforming was not his line.—Pearson's Weekly.

A DESERTER?

I was certain that his sergeant saw him, for a quick look of surprise and anger came into his watchful eyes. Then he quickly turned his head the other way.

But I watched the lusty young private who had caused the sergeant's look. He dropped out of the ranks of the Sixty-ninth on their way to the ferry, slid into the cheering crowd, pushed his way through, bounded up the steps of a house, at a window of which a moment before I had noticed the faces of two women—one old, one young—and as the door stood open for a moment there was a picture of one young man in heavy marching equipment smothered in the arms of two women, who were laughing and crying, as women will.

With some others I made a roundabout tour by uncrowded streets and saw the regiment pass again, and I noticed that the deserter's sergeant looked a bit worried and cast frequent anxious glances to the rear, as if hoping to see some one rejoin the ranks.

Well, I saw the noisy crowd disperse a second time as the regiment made its way toward the ferry and then went to Twenty-ninth street, for I hoped to catch a car on that obstructed route which would carry me to the water front in reasonable time.

As I waited the deserter came too. I could not be mistaken in his handsome face, though his eyes were a trifle red now, and I'd not noticed that before. He watched for the slow coming car with great nervousness, and as he did so, shifting his rifle from hand to hand, he rummaged his pockets. Such dismay overcame him one could easily understand his dilemma. Again and again he repeated his fruitless search, but as the car at last came along he shrugged his shoulders, laughed a little and boarded the front platform.

So did I.

"Hello, Mike!" he exclaimed cheerily to the driver, a hard faced old chap, with a stub of a white mustache.

Mike seemed to scowl.

"Cheer up, old Top," said the deserter, forcing his own spirits, it seemed. "I want you to stand me off with the conductor. I haven't the price."

My fingers twitched with the modest desire to pay the youngster's fare, but I held my hand, thinking that something interesting might occur.

"It's this way, Mike," continued the soldier. "I've got to get to the ferry with my company or I am disgraced."

Mike stared straight ahead, unhearing apparently, and the private tried again.

"You see, coming across town I passed our house—my home, I mean—and there was the old mother in the window beckoning me with her eyes, so I just sneaked out of the ranks. I intended to join the boys on the avenue, but—are you listening, you old curmudgeon?"

The driver was listening with all his ears, but he only scowled and gave no sign. A row with the conductor would cause a fatal delay, and the soldier seemed to think that might happen any moment. Yet to overtake his regiment he must stay on the car. When he resumed, it was with a bit of a brogue.

"There was more than the ould mother at home, Mike. There was a sweet girl, who is no daughter of my mother's—yet. Sure, man, there's no harrum in giving a kiss to a sweetheart when you are going off for a bit of a row where a Mauser bullet may meet you without the formality of an introduction."

Mike's bristle of a mustache quivered a bit, but otherwise he seemed as unfeeling, as obdurate, as at the start.

"They were near tearing me uniform off, do you see, Mike, houlding me there, while I was trying to get away—giving the both of them a kiss be way of making things aisy. I forgot I'd spent me last nickel in camp, so when I saw your car come along—that's a fine team you're driving—I jumps aboard, thinking all was well. But here comes the conductor, and he'll start a row."

Mike permitted himself a grim smile at this, but remained silent.

"You see," rattled on the deserter, "the mother was too sick to come over to camp, so I'd no chance at all to give her goodby, except I sneaked it, as I did. It's a wonder the way the women will take on."

The water front was in sight now, and the deserter was talking against time.

"Yes, they carry on with their tears and their blessings—do you mind your own mother when you left the ould sod—and, of course, I was not wanting to hurt the poor creatures. If you'd only seen the little one's eyes, Mike! If the dagoes let me come home, we're to be married when the war is over. Haven't you a tongue in your head at all, man? Well, here we are, and there's the regiment! I'm all right. I'll shoot a Spaniard for you, old man, but better than that, the mother will pray for you—you wicked old dummy!"

He started to jump from the car and out for the ferryhouse, but just then Mike grabbed him. With one hand the old driver dived down in his trousers pocket and brought up a dollar bill. It was all there was in it, for the pocket was turned inside out and you could see. Then at last the driver spoke:

"Take this, you young bla'garred!" and he thrust the bill at the deserter.

The soldier flushed and laughed and said:

"Not a bit of it! I'm broke now, but I'll have Spanish gold when I come back."

The driver grabbed the switch iron. "Take it!" he commanded. "Take it or I'll crack your head with this iron!"

The private took it, jumped and ran.

The conductor had rung "go ahead" a dozen times, but the driver, holding his horses still, watched the soldier until he saw him join his company. Then he started his horses and repeated:

"The young bla'garred!"—Edward W. Townsend in New York World.

Charles Dickens.

Sir Arthur Sullivan is quoted as saying of Charles Dickens that he was a most delightful companion. "Apart from his high spirits and engaging manner," the musician adds, "one might give two special reasons for this. On the one hand, he was so unassuming he never obtruded his own work upon you. I have never yielded to any one in my admiration of Dickens' work; but, speaking of him as a companion, I can safely say that one would never have known that Dickens was an author from his conversation. I mean that he never discussed himself with you, while, on the other hand, I have often since wondered at the wonderful interest he would apparently take in the conversation of us younger men. He would treat our feeblest banalities as if they were the choicest witticisms or the ripe meditations of a matured judgment."

Fast Horses.

A man never loses money on fast horses. It is the slow ones that drive him to the free lunch counter.—Burlington Gazette.

Korea's Advance.

Korea possesses a customs service that is excelled nowhere in the world. At its head are Englishmen, Frenchmen, Italians and representatives of other western lands who, while not interested in politics, exert a powerful influence for good upon the whole management of the country. The five open ports of Korea may expect to become model settlements, as three of them indeed already are. The growing import and export trade is slowly leavening the whole interior of Korea and enlightenment cannot but result. The growing coastwise trade, by rendering local famines next to impossible, will make less probable such popular uprisings as that of the Tong-haks and the "righteous army," for these originated, as all uprisings in Korea do, in lack of food. This in turn should render less necessary the maintaining of a standing army. Only such force would be necessary as the thorough policing of the country would demand.—Homer B. Hulbert in North American Review.

THE MOSQUITO'S SONG.

A Madrigal, Not a Warcry—How to Catch the Singer.

You can best observe the mosquito in action by letting one settle undisturbed on the back of your hand and waiting while she fills herself with your blood. You can easily watch her doing so with a pocket lens. Like the old lady in "Pickwick," she is soon "swelling visibly." She gorges herself with blood, indeed, which she straightway digests, assimilates and converts into three hundred eggs. But if while she is sucking you gently and unobtrusively tighten the skin of your hand by clinching your fist hard you will find that she cannot any longer withdraw her mandibles. They are caught fast in your flesh by their own harpoonlike teeth, and there she must stop accordingly till you chooses to release her. If you then kill her in the usual manner by a smart slap of the hand, you will see that she is literally full of blood, having sucked a good drop of it.

The humming sound itself by which the mosquito announces her approaching visit is produced in two distinct manners. The deeper notes which go to make up her droning song are due to the rapid vibration of the female insect's wings as she flies, but the higher and shriller notes of the complex melody are due to special stridulating organs situated like little drums on the openings of the air tubes.

The curious mosquito music thus generated by the little drums serves almost beyond a doubt as a means of attracting male mosquitoes, for it is known that the long hairs on the antennæ of the males vibrate sympathetically in unison with the notes of a tuning fork within the range of the sounds emitted by the female. In other words, hair and drums just answer to one another. We may therefore reasonably conclude that the female sings in order to please and attract her wandering mate and that the antennæ of the male are organs of hearing which catch and respond to the buzzing music she pours forth for her lover's ears. A whole swarm of gnats can be brought down, indeed, by uttering the appropriate note of the race. You can call them somewhat as you can call male glowworms by showing a light which they mistake for the female. —Strand Magazine.

Chiaroscuro—Its Effects.

The term which artists use to designate the distribution and blending of the lights and shadows in a picture and also the general effect produced by their management is "chiaroscuro." This word, or term, is made up of two Italian words, one signifying light and the other shadow. The word does not mean light and shadow, but the art of representing light in shadow and shadow in light, so that the parts of the picture in shadow shall have the clearness and detail of those in the light and those in the light shall have the softness and roundness of those in the shadow. By striving for "chiaroscuro" in photography we obtain—if we succeed—the effect in black and white which the artist gets by means of colors.

The effect of "chiaroscuro" in a photograph may be seen by comparing two pictures of the same subject, one taken at high noon, when the shadows are strong and directly beneath the objects, and another taken in the early morning or late afternoon, when the shadows are long and soft. In the first picture the shadows will appear as black patches and the high lights harsh and chalky, the contrast between the light and shade being sharp and unpleasant. In the second picture the objects in shadow will have as much detail as those in the sun, while the gradations between the lights and shadows will be soft and well blended.—Harper's Round Table.

Discretion.

Maurice and Johnnie have been rude to their mamma. Mamma has complained to papa, who is heard coming up stairs.

Johnnie—I say, Maurice, here comes papa. I shall pretend to be asleep.

Maurice—I shan't. I shall get up and put something on.—London Figaro.